



SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

MONTREAL 25, CANADA

March 4, 1969

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professor D.B. Clarke, Acting Principal
Dr. J.W. O'Brien, Vice-Principal Academic

FROM: Michael Sheldon, Assistant to the Principal

The following notes on the treatment of foreign students as well as on relations with the black community of Montreal are based on discussions with, primarily, Vernon Eccles, Mag Flynn, Joan Richardson, Alex Sproule and Tom Swift. They are not an exhaustive study of the subject but constitute an attempt to come up with some immediate recommendations.

There is no place for spectacular gestures or publicity campaigns; there is a need for a well-coordinated program of action. Part of this program now exists; the requirement is for greater coordination and consequent efficiency. Part of it would supplement present activities.

So far as foreign students are concerned - foreign meaning primarily West Indian and Hong Kong Chinese - we need to look especially to the better handling of relations in the coming academic year. It should be noted that, due to the introduction of the CEGEP-parallel program, there may be a reduction in the intake of foreign students. On the one hand, this would reduce somewhat the proportions of any problem. On the other, it may well make necessary a statement in the near future on applications, acceptances, etc., and I have arranged with Tom Swift to keep me informed of developments.

Many of the problems overseas students face are economic in origin, or economic as well as social. Housing is one of them, but at present all the University can do is provide assistance in seeking and vetting accomodation - and help in dealing with any discrimination encountered.

Employment is another. Officially, Montreal employers do not discriminate on a racial basis, and will in most instances have a ready justification

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for any apparent discrimination. It seems worthwhile, however, to set up a program of informal meetings with influential employers to ask for their cooperation in their handling of non-white applicants. On the one hand, I believe, this should be done at a senior level through members of the Board of Governors. On the other, I have asked John Hall to see if the topic might be discussed at a meeting of the Personnel Association. It should be noted here that the Immigration Department is being very helpful about granting students permission to engage in part-time work.

It is also proposed that arrangements be made for outside personnel experts to give seminars to foreign students on the preparation of resumés and the handling of employment interviews; many of them have not learnt how to present themselves to their best advantage.

Other continuing problems relate to health, diet, etc. For instance, foreign students are not covered by the provincial hospitalization scheme, and if they fall ill they can face crippling medical bills. On these and related matters they now go to Joan Richardson for help and advice, but she has other responsibilities and her time is limited - and even setting up appointments with the appropriate experts within the University takes time.

The period of arrival and orientation is of the utmost importance. Again, Joan Richardson, with assistance, has been looking after welcoming students and guiding them in the early stages. So far as possible she has used nationals of the students' country in this work. It might be desirable to add the services of Canadian students, perhaps at a slightly later stage, to avoid reinforcing any ghetto impression, and I understand the Garnet Key would be happy to cooperate. In any case, coordination is needed in this area, notably the establishment of a firm and early information system about acceptance, etc. This has the additional advantage of allowing Miss Richardson to call on alumni in the country of origin to start the orientation program, as many of them are eager to do.

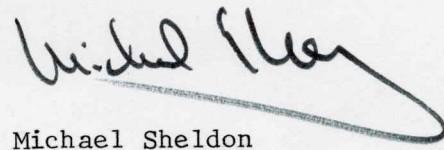
In view of these various needs, it has been decided to set up a special sub-committee for foreign students under the orientation committee, and this will hold its first meeting next week.

Looking at the diversity of the problem, and the requirement for careful, and often lengthy, attention to individual cases, I strongly recommend that the work of assisting foreign students be regarded as a full-time function. It seems important, too, that the person doing this work possess a certain status in dealing with other people both inside and outside the

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University - for instance, he or she should have an appropriate title.

The development of a program of this sort should be made known to the black community, and their cooperation be requested. I would also recommend two other activities, suggested by Vern Eccles. 1) A program of information about the University, covering what it has to offer as both a concept and a place, should be set up for black school-children. This would include talks by interested professors and a visit to the University. I gather that the parents would appreciate this kind of orientation. 2) The University should take a positive position on the improvement of human rights legislation in this province. Perhaps it could begin by organizing a conference, leading to definite recommendations to the legislature. A serious meeting, that is, not an excuse for confrontation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Sheldon". The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Michael Sheldon
Assistant to the Principal

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